IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of cutting foils comprising a carrier film and a decorative layer disposed thereon and including at least one lacquer layer, said method comprising:

forming a removal track on the carrier film by removing a region of the decorative layer by means of laser radiation along a cut line, wherein a laser is used, which has a transverse laser radiation intensity distribution with respect to the direction of advance movement of the foil, and wherein the transverse laser radiation intensity distribution corresponds to a rectangular profile; and

cutting the carrier film in the removal track by means of a blade.

2. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said removal track has a width and said blade has a thickness, and wherein said removal track is wider than the thickness of the blade.

3. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said removal track has a width of between 1 and 3 mm.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein an Nd:YAG- or diode laser is used for removal of the decorative layer.

5. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 4, wherein said laser has a power of between 20 and 50 watts.

6. (Cancelled) ~~A method according to claim 1, wherein a laser is used, which has a transverse laser radiation intensity distribution with respect to the direction of advance movement of the foil and relative to the laser beam, which corresponds to a rectangular profile.~~

7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein the region of the decorative layer is removed by contacting the decorative layer with a laser beam at an impingement point on the surface of the decorative layer and wherein the carrier film is cut at a spacing of less than 70 mm from said impingement point.

8. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein operation is effected with cutting speeds of at least 40 m/min.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for cutting foils comprising a carrier film and a decorative layer disposed thereon and including at least one lacquer layer, said apparatus comprising a laser producing a laser beam and a cutting blade having a thickness, wherein the foil moves in a direction and the laser beam first contacts the foil at an impingement point on the surface of the decorative layer and forms a removal track having a width in the decorative layer by removing a region of the decorative layer from the carrier film along a cut line, <u>wherein the laser has a transverse laser radiation intensity distribution with respect to the direction of</u>

movement of the foil, and wherein the transverse laser radiation intensity distribution corresponds to a rectangular profile, wherein said removal track is wider than the thickness of the cutting blade and wherein the cutting blade is spaced from the impingement point of the laser beam in the direction of movement of the foil.

10. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a device for deflecting the laser beam.

11. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a device for varying the diameter of the laser beam.

12. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a means for regulating the power of the laser based on the rate of movement of the foil.

13. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the spacing is less than 70 mm.

14. (Previously Presented) An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the laser beam and the cutting bade are arranged on the same side of the foil to be cut.